

## Aldous Huxley, the Bates Method, *The Art of Seeing*, and Frederick Matthias Alexander: An Unexpected, Overhauled History

### Author Details:

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**Abstract:** *This case study cites the only known letter of Aldous Huxley to F. Matthias Alexander. The case study also discusses the background of this Huxley letter to Alexander.*

**Key Words:** *Frederick Matthias Alexander, Dr. William Horatio Bates, Dr. Jean Baptiste Claverie, Edwin Cox, Margaret Souders Darst Corbett, Aldous Leonard Huxley, Bernarr Adolphus Macfadden. Alexander Technique, Bates Method, bodybuilding, physical culture.*

**Conflict of Interest:** *Dr. Jeroen Staring is the owner of the December 30, 1938 letter, typewritten and signed by Aldous Huxley, sent to F. M. Alexander Esq., London, England.*

### Introduction: Aldous Huxley and Gyrating Mexican Jumping Beans, Part I

On March 22, 1941, Edwin Cox (1941) published a cartoon in the *Buffalo Courier-Express* ‘Private lives’ comic series — regarding Aldous Huxley’s poor eyesight. Aldous Huxley sits at a table, staring at a number of dots on the table, one appearing to jump. The text reads,

Curious Cure. The Brilliant English writer, Aldous Huxley, declares he has rid himself of partial blindness by regular sessions of staring steadily at — of all things — a Mexican jumping bean.

Allegedly, Cox’s cartoon — also published in the *Courier-Journal*, *Democrat and Chronicle*, *Pittsburgh Press*, *Shreveport Times*, and perhaps in other newspapers too — annoyed Huxley so intensely that he immediately started to write a book on the years of single-minded efforts to cure his impaired vision. As a consequence, a year later he published *The Art of Seeing* in the United States (Huxley, 1942), and two years later in England (Huxley, 1943).

### F. Matthias Alexander: Rows and Rows of History Fakes

Apart from the fact that Cox’s cartoon genuinely appeared in the *Buffalo Courier-Express* and in the other newspapers as described above, and apart from the fact that the publication dates and title of Huxley’s book are 100 % correct, the nice little story above is, of course, a gross distortion of history. In fact, the story simply is not true. Mind you, anecdotes and stories relating the history of Huxley’s *The Art of Seeing* often are exactly that: distortions of history. For instance, Sanford Marovitz states in his paper ‘A New Look at *The Art of Seeing*’ that F. Matthias Alexander — who commenced teaching his Alexander Technique to Huxley in November 1935, and who was mentioned twice in Huxley’s book (Huxley, 1942, pp. 88, 273; 1943, pp. 39, 144) — came up with a method of overcoming physical disabilities “through self-examination aided by X-ray photography” (Marovitz, 2010, p. 116; italics added).

In his 1931 book *The Use of the Self*, former entertainer F. M. Alexander described his years of search for a method to overcome vocal problems while performing on stage when young. Eventually, around 1894, he indicated, he found a breathing method that helped to solve his problems. Later, Alexander became known for another method, the so-called Alexander Technique (Staring, 2005).

Back to Marovitz’s anecdote: according to his *The Use of the Self*, Alexander’s self-examination took place during the early 1890s. Consequently, it logically could *not* have been aided by X-ray photography, because Wilhelm Röntgen discovered the existence of X-rays only in 1895. Therefore: nice story by Marovitz, yet not true.

Similar gross distortions of history *unlikely* often happen in the case of stories and anecdotes relating to Alexander. Distorted history seems to be inextricably linked to Alexander, his technique, his writings, and to stories and writings of his followers — starting with Alexander’s claim of Scottish descent (not true, see

Staring, 2005), followed by his claims to have conducted some kind of anthropological research while in New Zealand in 1895 (not true, see Staring, 2009), or to have successfully treated numerous respected Edwardian actresses and actors, for instance, Sir Henry Irving, Robert Loraine, and Lewis Waller (not true, see Staring, 2018), or to claims to have been plagiarized by various persons (not true, see Staring, 2005). Or, or, or...the list goes on, and on, and on. At times plain lies constitute the core of the falsifications of the history of Alexander and his Alexander Technique — white lies or not (see Staring, 2015). At best, largely in the case of Alexander’s followers, it may be just the way in which subjects are explained that leads to history falsifications. For example, Alexander biographer Michael Bloch tells the following anecdote about Alexander (= F. M.), the Bates Method, and Aldous Huxley:

When the myopic Huxley, who had given [Alexander] so much support over *The Universal Constant*, became a propagandist for the Bates method of eye exercises, F. M., who regarded such exercises as ‘end-gaining,’ concluded that Huxley must have gone off his head. (Bloch, 2004, p. 189).

Bloch’s somewhat elliptical writing strongly suggests to the reader that Huxley became a Bates Method propagandist *after* he had published ‘End-Gaining and Means-Whereby’ in the October 25, 1941, *Saturday Review of Literature* — that is, Huxley’s review of Alexander’s (1941) book *The Universal Constant in Living*. In this, he explained Alexander’s theory regarding a proper ‘use of the self’ as well as Alexander’s vocabulary. Next, in Bloch’s story, Alexander immediately disapproved of Huxley doing his Bates Method exercises. Chronologically, the incidents told by Bloch should, therefore, be placed on Huxley’s timeline around the end of 1941, or perhaps at the beginning of 1942. Yet, this would contradict an anecdote told by Bloch’s fellow Alexander biographer Frank Pierce Jones.

When I began the [Alexander Technique teacher] training course in July 1941, I was the only student in it...During that summer F. M. received a disturbing letter from Aldous Huxley. Huxley was then living in southern California and had become enthusiastic about the Bates Method of eye exercises. Mrs. Corbett, his teacher, was being sued in the Los Angeles court by a group of oculists or ophthalmologists [*sic.*] for practicing medicine without a license. Huxley planned to testify on her behalf and was trying to rally other unorthodox practitioners to her support. F. M. did not consider himself an unorthodox practitioner and dismissed the Bates Method as another form of end-gaining. He wrote back expostulating with Huxley for deserting the means-whereby principle in favor of “beastly exercises.” After I returned to Brown [= Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island where Jones taught Greek and Latin; J.S.] that fall I was asked to review *The Universal Constant in Living* and *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* for the *Providence Sunday Journal*. (Jones, 1976, p. 77).

The review that Jones was referring to is ‘Finding the Whole Person’ that appeared on January 11, 1942, *Providence Sunday Journal* (reprinted in Dimon & Brown (Eds.), 1998, pp. 1-3). Jones’s story indicates that Huxley’s instructor of the Bates Method in 1941 was Margaret Darst Corbett. The story also implicates that Alexander responded to a letter from Huxley by sending him a letter at some time during the summer, or perhaps as late as during the early autumn, of 1941. The text more or less suggests that the letter was the first about the Bates Method Huxley sent to Alexander. Thirty years later, Sanford Marovitz (2010, pp. 114-115) faithfully retells Jones’s story, even though he knows (about) *and* even though he cites Philip Pollack’s book *The Truth About Eye Exercises*. Pollack (1956) forcefully stated, “In *January 1941*, the court found the defendant [= Margaret Corbett; J.S.] not guilty...” (pp. 7-8; italics added). In fact, this means that the court case indicated by Jones, paraphrased by Marovitz, was *not* held mid-1941, but six months earlier, in January 1941 (*New York Post*, 1941; *San Bernardino Daily Sun*, 1941a-c). Again the conclusion must be: nice stories by Jones and Marovitz, yet not true. The circumstance that neither Jones, nor Marovitz fact-checked the date of Corbett’s court case leads to history fakes regarding the exact date Huxley contacted Alexander about Corbett’s court case, and the time Alexander replied. Or do the stories of Bloch, Jones, and Marovitz all represent a complete fake history?

But then, one can object that perhaps Alexander really dismissed Bates’s Method on the grounds of “end-gaining” and not using the “means-whereby” — at another time than mid-1941? The phrases ‘end-gaining’ and ‘means-whereby’ are concepts that clearly stem from Alexander’s vocabulary. Huxley’s (1941) review of Alexander’s (1941) book *The Universal Constant in Living* explains them to the American public. The concepts even constitute the title of the book review: ‘End-Gaining and Means-Whereby.’ In fact, Huxley’s text was more an introduction to Alexander’s lexicon of neologisms than a book review in the

strict sense of the word. Huxley referred to the concepts again in *The Art of Seeing* — where he immediately stated their provenance when he first introduced them.

In the words of Mr. F. M. Alexander, we all tend to be greedy ‘end-gainers,’ paying no attention to our ‘means-whereby.’ (Huxley, 1942, p. 88; 1943, p. 39).

Jones’s story, cited above, also implies that Huxley and Alexander exchanged opinions regarding the Bates Method. London Alexander Technique teacher training course Director Walter Carrington once stated that Huxley and Alexander indeed “exchanged letters on the subject” (Carrington & Carey, 1992, p. 10). However, *Letters of Aldous Huxley* (Smith (Ed.), 1969) and *Selected Letters of Aldous Huxley* (Sexton (Ed.), 2007) do not contain correspondence to Alexander. Both books therefore even give the impression that Huxley was not in regular correspondence with Alexander — if at all.

Regrettably, various special collections of Aldous Huxley writings — e.g., in the New York City Public Library; the University of Houston Libraries; the Grover Cleveland Smith Collection of Aldous Huxley Correspondence; the Online Archive of California; the Purdue University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections — do not seem to possess a single letter to or from Alexander either.

### **Aldous Huxley Discusses Experiences with the Bates Method in Letters to Others**

Interestingly, Huxley did discuss his experiences with the Bates Method in letters sent to others (than Alexander). In a 1942 letter he wrote, “Three years ago, I accidentally stumbled upon an educational method (that of Dr. W. H. Bates of New York...), by the aid of which I am gradually learning to see again” (Smith (Ed.), 1969, p. 473).

So, what exactly should be the conclusion; did Huxley start having lessons in 1939? The chronological timeline of Huxley’s life drawn by Grover Smith — the first editor of Huxley’s letters — shows that Huxley commenced his lessons in the spring of 1939 (Smith (Ed.), 1969, p. 16). Additionally, Smith claimed that *as of* 1939 Huxley “was taught the Bates method by Margaret D. Corbett” (p. 441). Marovitz (2010) also stated Huxley “commenced his lessons in the Bates Method in 1939 with Margaret Darst Corbett” (p. 112). But then, James Sexton — another editor of Huxley’s letters — stated that Huxley started to explore “the Bates method for improving vision” in November of 1938 and that a month later he already noticed “some improvement in his eyesight” (Sexton (Ed.), 2007, p. 351). How Sexton deduced this conclusion using his sources is not at all clear. The Huxley letters he selected and edited for his book do not support his view.

All this is really intriguing. Questions arise immediately; for example,

- a. Exactly when did Aldous Huxley start taking lessons in the Bates Method from Margaret Corbett?
- b. Did Aldous Huxley forthwith write to F. Matthias Alexander about his lessons?
- c. Did Aldous Huxley and F. Matthias Alexander really exchange their opinions on the theory and practice of that Method?

The fact that Huxley’s book *The Art of Seeing* has a special, specific small ‘Appendix’ that deals with both the Alexander Technique and the Bates Method are a fair indication Huxley and Alexander did indeed exchange views before the book was first published in the autumn of 1942. The ‘Appendix’ seems to point to the truth that Huxley wished to voice; his stand, based on his personal experience, that — especially for adult myopes — lessons from Alexander or an Alexander Technique teacher ought to be supplemented with lessons from a teacher of the Bates Method, is a position that presumably deviated from that of Alexander.

In myopes especially, posture tends to be extremely bad. This may be directly due in some cases to the short sight, which encourages stooping and hanging of the head. Conversely, myopia may be due in part at least to the bad posture. F. M. Alexander records cases in which myopic children regained normal vision after being taught the proper way of carrying the head and neck in relation to the trunk.

In adults, the correction of improper posture does not seem to be sufficient of itself to restore normal vision. Improvement in vision will be accelerated by those who learn to correct faulty habits of using the organism as a whole, but the simultaneous learning of the specific art of seeing is indispensable. (Huxley, 1942, p. 273; 1943, p. 144).

As indicated, Alexander probably had a (radical) different opinion. This may also be concluded from the work of Alexander biographer Jean M. O. Fischer who paraphrased a letter sent by Alexander in 1943 to friends in England, in which he commented on *The Art of Seeing*. Huxley's book disappointed him, "as it suggested exercises without consideration of the use of the whole self (and only a brief reference to the [Alexander] Technique)" (Fischer, 2000, p. 263; see *Note 1*).

### **A Typewritten Letter, signed by Huxley, Sent to F. M. Alexander Esq., London, England**

According to *Letters of Aldous Huxley*, the earliest known letter written by Huxley regarding his experiences with the Bates Method dates from July 30, 1939 — a letter to his brother Julian (consult Smith (Ed.), 1969, pp. 441-443). However: the following letter, typewritten by Huxley, sent to F. M. Alexander Esq. in London, England dates from December 30, 1938. Huxley used a typewriter that printed very large font. In the autumn of 2016, the author of this case study bought the letter (see *Note 2*).

[....]. My dear F.M.,

I wish I could be present at your birthday party next month. But, alas, geography is against it, and I must be content to be there in the spirit only. Meanwhile, this little note brings you all the family's best wishes and most affectionate greetings.

Life goes quietly here, as I have had to take things very easy all this autumn in an effort to get rid of the tiresome after-effects of pneumonia I had this spring. I rest a lot and eat, and am growing in consequence almost stout. In the intervals, I do a certain amount of work on a long and comprehensive book and have just started on a treatment for my eyes which has already begun to show some results. The treatment follows the methods of the late Dr. Bates of New York --- methods which you should find particularly interesting since they constitute in many respects an application of your principles to the special case of the defective eye. Bates's thesis is that the great majority of eye defects are due to wrong use --- primarily to a strain set up by the effort to see. Essentially, his method consists of a gradual education in the proper means whereby proper sight can be enjoyed. The patient has to unlearn his end gaining and discover for himself how to achieve that complete relaxation which is the condition of normal sight. If you do not already know it, I am sure you would be interested in Bates's book, "Perfect Sight without Glasses." The proff [*sic.*] of Bates's pudding is in the eating. He succeeded, and his pupils continue to succeed in curing thousands of people of every kind of ocular defect. I have met a number of them here, and some of their cases are really extraordinary. My own condition is, of course, rather bad, inasmuch as there is an actual opacity, due to scar tissue, on the cornea; but the man I am going to holds out hope that the treatment will lead to its absorption, at any rate in part, while the error in refraction may be completely corrected. So I go on patiently [*sic.*], encouraged by the fact that there has already, in a few weeks, been something like a twenty percent improvement in vision. The man I go here is a Frenchman called Claverie, who was frightfully wounded in the war, completely losing the sight of one eye and losing most of the sight of the other. All the experts advised him to have the blind eye taken out, for fear that sympathetic ophthalmia should set in and destroy the sight of the other. Finally, he went to Bates, was completely cured, and has been practicing the method ever since. He has a pupil in London, called, I think, Walter Hopkins, who practices in Upper Brook Street. It might interest you, I think, to have a talk with him about a line of work which so interestingly carries your principles into another field of action. In another fifty years, it may be that orthodox medicine [*sic.*] will see the enormous significance of those principles. [....].

Ever yours, Aldous H.

### **The Bates Method ~ The Alexander Technique?**

The information in Huxley's letter, sent to Alexander on the last-but-one day of 1938, leads to the following first series of deductions.

*i.* Huxley delivered Alexander with fitting information and references, that is, the basis for a sound exchange of opinions. Especially his lines, "Essentially, his method consists of a gradual education in the proper means whereby proper sight can be enjoyed. The patient has to unlearn his end gaining and discover for himself how to achieve that complete relaxation which is the condition of normal sight" tried to convey to Alexander an opening to study the Bates Method and compare it with his Technique. Note that Huxley



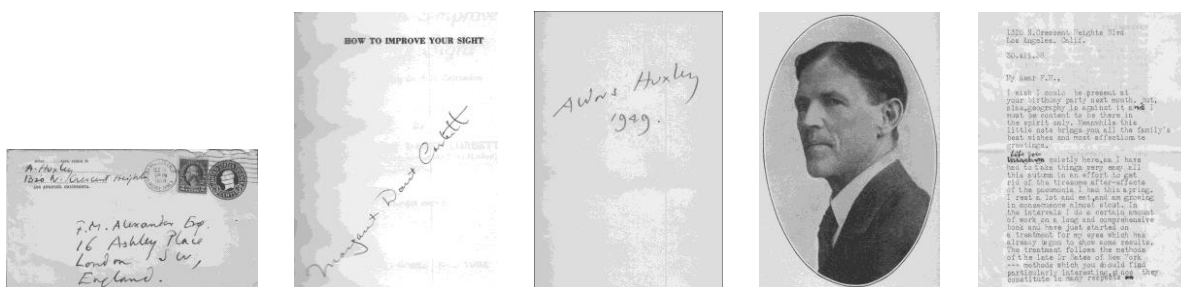
presumptuously chose phrases from Alexander’s vocabulary, e.g., concepts like ‘means whereby’ and ‘end-gaining.’ He obviously placed Bates’s Method in the light of Alexander’s Technique by proposing that it constitutes “in many respects an application of your [= Alexander’s; J.S.] principles to the special case of the defective eye.” It seems Huxley was linking Bates’s Method to Alexander’s Technique by suggesting to Alexander to have a conversation with a student of his Bates Method teacher in London “about a line of work which so interestingly carries your principles into another field of action.” It means that Huxley already let Alexander know that he saw very strong resemblances in the Bates Method and the Alexander Technique. In letters to others, he explained his observation (consult Smith (Ed.), 1969, pp. 473-474, 526-527).

We may well accept that Alexander knew about Huxley’s lessons in the Bates Method, as early as January 1939 — when he received Huxley’s December 30, 1938, letter. It is quite possible that both men *from that date onwards* were in a lively and regular correspondence about the Bates Method. Unfortunately, no other letters seem to have survived.

### Dr. Jean Baptiste Claverie: Huxley’s First Teacher of the Bates Method?

The information in Huxley’s letter, sent to Alexander on the last-but-one day of 1938, also leads to another series of deductions.

ii. In 1938, Huxley had had a course of lessons in the Bates Method from a “Frenchman called Claverie.” Initial research regarding the information in Huxley’s letter about his teacher leads to the conclusion that Dr. Jean Baptiste Claverie was that teacher (see *Note 3*). By the mid-thirties, Claverie possessed a flourishing practice in Los Angeles where he leased the complete 11th floor at 5225 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles — the Clem Wilson building, corner La Brea and Wilshire. In January 1936, Claverie advertised in the *Desert Sun of Palm Springs, California*: “Dr. Jean B. Claverie...Specializing in The Treatment of Imperfect Sight without glasses wishes to announce the opening of his winter office in The Carnell Building at Palm Springs, California” (Claverie, 1936a). He leased “all of the 14 offices across the entire 100-foot frontage of the upper floor of the Carnell building” (*Desert Sun of Palm Springs, California*, 1936a). Next, in February and March 1936, Claverie was more specific in his advertisements, stating he specialized in the treatment of hyperopia, myopia, presbyopia, strabismus, astigmatism, cataract, and glaucoma (e.g., Claverie, 1936b-c). In April 1936, the *Desert Sun of Palm Springs, California* (1936b) announced that Claverie returned to Los Angeles. This shows that Claverie’s practice in Los Angeles was extremely successful. At the time Huxley became his client, Claverie combined osteopathy and the Bates Method in his Los Angeles practice (Halladay, 1941).



**Fig. 1: Envelope, Aldous Huxley to F. M. Alexander Esq.; stamped Dec 31 5<sup>30</sup> PM 1938.\* Fig. 2: Margaret Darst Corbett signature in her *How to Improve Your Sight* (Corbett, 1953).\* Fig. 3: Aldous Huxley signature in his *The Art of Seeing* (Huxley, 1942).\* Fig. 4: Dr. William H. Bates, M.D. in *Strengthening the Eyes* (Macfadden & Bates, 1918, Part 1, p. 10). Fig. 5: First page of a letter by Aldous Huxley to F. M. Alexander Esq., 30.xii.1938.\* (\* = Jeroen Staring Collection.)**

How did Huxley hear about Claverie’s work?

There is only one single — perhaps therefore genuine — a vague indication in the literature. Editor, writer and book designer Merle Armitage wrote in his *Accent on America*,

Dr. Jean B. Claverie, an accepted practitioner of the Bates System, enabled me to abandon glasses after twenty-eight years of slavery to them. I have temporarily returned to a much less powerful type due to the military service. Dr. Claverie's success with my case came to the attention of Aldous Huxley, who was approaching total blindness. Huxley's new book [= *The Art of Seeing*; J.S.] is a testimonial to the efficacy of this method. (Armitage, 1944, pp. 344-345).

### Somehow, Mysteriously, Dr. Claverie Did *not* Emerge in Huxley's Writings

Huxley did *not* mention Claverie in the 'Preface' to his 1942 *The Art of Seeing*. He mentioned Margaret Corbett instead, "to whose skill as a teacher [he owned] the improvement in [his] vision" (Huxley, 1942, p. ix; 1943, p. vii). Notice further that there is not *any* mention of Dr. Claverie at all in *The Art of Seeing*, or in other Huxley writings. Even more intriguingly, after Huxley had explained that at sixteen he had had an attack of *keratitis punctata* that left him with impaired vision, heavy spectacles, strains, and fatigue, as well as the need to dilate a pupil with atropine in order to be able to read well (enough), he claimed,

Things went on in this way *until the year 1939*, in spite of greatly strengthened glasses, I found the task of reading increasingly difficult and fatiguing. There could be no doubt of it: my capacity to see was steadily and quite rapidly failing. But just as I was wondering apprehensively what on earth I should do, if reading were to become impossible, I happened to hear of a method of visual re-education and of a teacher who was said to make use of this method with conspicuous success... Within a couple of months, I was reading without spectacles and, what was better, without strain and fatigue. (Huxley, 1942, p. viii; 1943, p. vi; italics added).

We have to conclude that Huxley did *not* acknowledge his 1938 lessons with Claverie *at all* in his writings — except in his letter to Alexander, above. In *The Art of Seeing*, he even indicated he started his lessons in 1939! So, at some time between December 1938 and 1942 — when *The Art of Seeing* was first published — Huxley changed teachers of the Bates Method? Or, perhaps he went to both teachers for a while but did not tell anyone about it?

In a 1939 letter to his brother Julian, Huxley wrote, "In the intervals of writing, I have been working on my eyes, taking lessons from an admirable teacher here who was trained by the late Dr. Bates of New York, the deviser of the method which bears his name" (p. 441). In the same letter, Huxley also wrote that "the number of effective teachers of the Bates method is at present ludicrously small. *There are one or two here*, one or two in New York" (p. 442; italics added). Was Claverie the "admirable teacher," since Huxley was unable to tell how many teachers of the Bates Method practised in Los Angeles (~ "one or two here")? Perhaps, at the time of writing to his brother, in July 1939, Huxley may not even have heard or known about Margaret Corbett, his later teacher?

On the other hand, although Claverie was "in excellent health and enjoying a really big practice in Los Angeles" by the end of 1941 (Halladay, 1941), he died three years later, aged 62, on August 20, 1944 (*New York Times*, 1944).

Therefore, many scenarios can be imagined that might have led to Huxley changing teachers of the Bates Method and not mentioning Claverie as his first teacher.

### Sybille Bedford's *Aldous Huxley: A Biography*. Mysteries Solved?

Aldous Huxley biographer Sybille Bedford (1973) solved part of the above enigmas in her *Aldous Huxley: A Biography*. Huxley indeed visited the practice of Claverie in Los Angeles in November/December 1938, *but not after* he had first had a number of lessons with another teacher of the Bates Method (not yet identified). Bedford paraphrased Huxley's wife, Maria:

The teacher, according to Maria was so paralytically stupid that Aldous did not go on, though he realized that there might be a lot in it. Now he found *another man* in Los Angeles. (p. 366; italics added).

Bedford then cited a December 1938 letter written by Maria. She observed, "Aldous goes on with his oculist and must be pleased with him" (p. 366). Since we know the contents of Huxley's December 1938 letter to Alexander (cited above), we can safely conclude that the "oculist" in question must have been Claverie. Bedford continued,

Aldous's eyes *are* improving. Four weeks have passed—three hours at the “oculist” every morning—constant, watchful attention to the right use. (p. 368; italics Bedford).

The chronological timeline of Huxley's life in *Aldous Huxley: A Biography*, unlike the one in *Letters of Aldous Huxley* (Smith (Ed.), 1969), therefore confirms that November 1938 was the approximate “beginning of Aldous's attempt to improve his sight by the Bates Method,” and that Aldous Huxley had an intensive “training with a Bates Teacher...Some improvement of sight noted by Maria” (Bedford, 1973, p. 392).

Bedford also revealed that Huxley had met Margaret Corbett at some undisclosed time in the winter or spring of 1939. It seems Huxley then preferred Corbett's lessons over Claverie's and that he changed teachers. “To her now he went six times a week” (p. 373).

## Epilogue: Aldous Huxley and Gyrating Mexican Jumping Beans, Part II

Would it be fair to blame Jones and in his path Marovitz, and/or others, for sloppy research? Well, yes and no. It seems biographers parrot their idols or each other without doing thorough research. On the other hand, in case there is no conclusive evidence like for instance the December 1938 Huxley letter to Alexander, it is certainly no sin that they did not know better. Yet, they should have known better in cases discussed above; that is to say: they should have researched far better.

Lastly, “What about Aldous Huxley who was observing Mexican jumping beans in a cartoon?” Well, on January 24th, 1941, according to the *New York Post* (1941), Huxley declared as a witness during the court case where Mrs. Margaret D. Corbett and her assistant Miss Bertha Smith were “being tried on a charge of giving eye treatments without having an optometric license” that Mrs. Corbett and Miss Smith “gave him their ‘relaxation treatment’ part of which consists of staring at a Mexican jumping bean.” *New York Post* further reported,

Many prominent Hollywood residents have offered to testify for the women among them Irene Rich, Billie Burke, Anita Loos, and Mrs. Jesse Lasky, who said they would describe the benefits they got from watching jumping beans and bouncing rice.

In the last week of January 1941, the news about the court case and those jumping beans were reported in a flood of US newspapers, nation-wide (see *Note 4*).

It seems that focussing on Mexican jumping beans formed part and parcel of Margaret Corbett's lessons in the Bates method. This, of course, formed excellent food for cartoonists.

## Notes

1. It would certainly be interesting to investigate why F. Matthias Alexander allegedly reacted so dismissively to Bates's Method, starting with questions regarding the flirtations with bodybuilding in the forgotten, nebulous past of both men. For instance, ophthalmologist Bates and bodybuilder Bernarr Macfadden jointly published a course in ‘Scientific Eye Training’ in 1918 (Macfadden & Bates, 1918). The same year they then already went their own way again (e.g., Bates, 1920; Macfadden, 1918, 1942). Alexander (1903) wished to publish a book in 1904, including exercises for bodybuilding and physical culture. The book was never issued. Alexander emigrated from Australia to England in 1904. He never referred to those exercises again. Yet, however interesting such researches may be, they are not subject of this case study.
2. Manchester Alexander Technique teacher training course Director Malcolm Williamson (2017) explains the background of the author's purchase of Huxley's 1938 letter to Alexander.
3. In 1906, Jean Baptiste Claverie, when still a young man, emigrated from France to the United States where he studied osteopathy at the American School of Osteopathy in Kirksville, Missouri. On August 5, 1914, not long after the outbreak of WWI, he returned to France to defend his motherland (*Osteopathic Physician*, 1914). He was first attached to the medical corps and later, after becoming an airplane pilot in 1916, to the aviation corps (*Chicago Commerce*, 1919; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1919; *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, 1918). *New York Tribune* published a letter written by Claverie, sent from France to a New York friend not long after he had arrived at the war front in Europe in 1915 (Claverie, 1915). In 1917, 1918 and 1919, *Osteopathic Truth*, *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, *Journal of Osteopathy* and *Osteopathic Physician* published letters written by Claverie (1917a-b, 1918a-c, 1919). Claverie suffered frozen feet once,

was gassed twice, and got wounded several times, badly injuring his face and especially his eyes (Claverie, 1917; Foreman, 1920; *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, 1919; *Journal of Osteopathy*, 1918, 1919; *Osteopathic Physician*, 1918). It forced him to wear dark glasses — compare photos in *Osteopathic Truth* (Claverie, 1917) and *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1919). Claverie was rewarded the *Croix de Guerre* with palms, the *Médaille militaire* — and on top of that the *Légion d'honneur* after the war. Following his return to the United States, he completed his osteopathy studies in Chicago in 1922 (Walter, 1992). Three years later he also completed Bates's course on the "Cure of Imperfect Sight by Treatment Without Glasses" (see Bates, 1920). Years later, in 1931, several newspapers reported about his wedding with Zelle Lauhle — his childhood love (*Evening Star*, 1931; *New York Sun*, 1931; *Times-Union*, 1931).

4. See, for instance, *Amarillo Daily News*, *Brainerd Daily Dispatch*, *Des Moines Register*, *Evening Herald* (from Klamath Falls), *Kingsport Times*, *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, *Marysville Journal-Tribune*, *Oakland Tribune*, *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, *Pittsburgh Press*, *San Bernardino County Sun*, and *Tipton Daily Tribune*.

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